

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION SHEET

SARS TRANSMISSION

SARS-CoV is spread primarily through droplets (respiratory secretions) and close person-to-person contact. Close contact is defined as having cared for, lived with, or direct contact with the respiratory secretions and/or body fluids of a person with SARS. Although not proven, it is possible that SARS-CoV can also be spread more broadly through the air (airborne), by touching objects that have come in contact with the SARS virus or by fecal contamination, as the virus can be excreted in the stool.

Because respiratory droplets are the primary method of transmission, the first line of defense for prevention and control of SARS is proper hand hygiene and the implementation of a universal “respiratory hygiene” strategy as described in the “General Infection Control Measures” fact sheet, available at www.state.ma.us/dph.

In the absence of a vaccine or effective treatment, the best way to limit the impact of SARS is to rapidly identify persons possibly infected with SARS-CoV and to activate the following control measures to prevent the spread of the virus:

- o Disease surveillance;
- o Detection and isolation of cases;
- o Identification and monitoring of case contacts;
- o Adherence to infection control precautions; and if necessary
- o Restriction of movement of potentially infected persons.

